SCRAP BOOK OF W9RH EMIL R FELBER JR.

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Amateur Radio Operators Perform Service of Mercy

Disaster at Any Spot on Earth Proves Importance of 'Boys' at Their Sets

Picks Milwaukee Messages Out of Air

[Journal Staff Photos]

EDWIN A. CARY, 3397-A N. Twenty-third st., veteran Milwaukee amateur radio operator, is shown at the receiving set where he works one hour daily, 7 to 8 a. m., without pay, taking messages from all over the world for Milwaukeeans or anyone in the middle west. These traffic men of radio never accept a cent in pay but are willing to have postage refunded. They mail the messages.

A close relative of a Milwaukeean was lying at death's door in Baguio, Philippine islands.

The Milwaukeean learned of it by a free radiogram. Since the first message many cheering messages have been received. The Milwaukeean has also sent messages through the courtesy of amateur radio operators. Some of these messages have been received by Edwin A. Cary of Milwaukee, others by amateurs in many cities.

While most men are reading the morning newspaper or eating breakfast, Edwin A. Cary, 3397-A N. Twenty-third st., veteran Milwaukee amateur radio operator, is tuning in on the world!

For one hour daily the Milwaukeean gives his time to a hobby, which through its practical service has proven of more benefit to mankind than any other amateur sport of the century.

Conscientiously reserving the hour between 7 and 8 to receiving and sending messages without pay, Mr. Cary, like thousands of other amateur radio operators throughout the world, sits with his ear to the universe for emergency messages of disaster, distress, word from expeditions in out of the way places and messages of sickness and death. In between these serious messages come less important ones to Milwaukeeans, or persons elsewhere relayed at this point.

Between 100 and 150 messages a month are received, delivered or relayed by Mr. Cary to other points along a vast trunk line governed by the American Radio Relay league. Mr. Cary's call letters are W9ATO. He holds the honorary title of route manager of the Wisconsin (Milwaukee county No. 1) section of the central division. Delivery of message is never guaranteed and charge never made, but the amateur radio delivery record is high.

Many Amateurs Here

Amateur radio operators throughout Milwaukee are numbered by the hundreds, but there is a small group only of traffic men here who handle and send messages for others. The majority of amateur radio operators here are "experimenters" or "DX, long distance, 'hounds.'" There is a local club called Milwaukee Radio Amateur club, of which Emil R. Felber, jr., 1625 N. Eighteenth st., is president.

Mr. Cary, who only recently relayed a message from Admiral Byrd's ship, is one of this country's army of amateur traffic men who since 1919 have given valuable service in emergencies and disasters. The most important services rendered by these amateurs were in assisting with communications in the Florida hurricane of 1926, the Mississippi and New England floods of 1927, the California dam break and the second Florida hurricane of 1928.

During 1931 amateurs helped out in the New Zealand and Nicaraguan earthquakes and the Viking explosion disaster in Labrador. In 1932 the floods at Caliente, Calif., and the upper Guadelupe valley of Texas found the amateur radio operators on the job. Red Cross centers in various parts of the United States are now furnished with lists of amateur stations in the vicinity as a regular part of their emergency measures program.

Co-operation With Expeditions

Amateur co-operation with expeditions started in 1923, when a league member, Don Mix of Bristol, Conn., accompanied MacMillan to the arctic on the schooner Bowdoin in charge of an amateur set. Amateurs in Canada and this country provided the home contact. The success of this venture was such that MacMillan has never since made the trip without carrying short wave equipment and an amateur to operate it. Other explorers noted this success and made inquiries to the league regarding similar arrangements to

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keep in contact through the medium of amateur radio.

When the Byrd expedition went to the antarctic three of its four operators were amateurs, and amateur stations in the United States furnished a great part of the communication with this country. Even in aviation the amateur contributes his services. Admiral Byrd utilized it in both his actic and antarctic trips. Wilkins took along an amateur operator to the polar regions when he made his flights over the great wastes north of the American continent, and on both this and his antarctic trip made use of communication with amateurs for the handling of messages.

The American Radio Relay league, which operates with 13 distinct divisions, consisting of amateur radio stations in certain areas, is today the largest amateur organization in the world. It is non-commercial and has no stockholders. Its purpose is to represent the amateur in legislative matters, promote interest in two-way amateur communication and experimentation, and relay messages by amateur radio. The league headquarters are at West Hartford, Conn.

"Long before the war amateur radio operators were devoting their time and brains to radio," Mr. Cary said. "Since the war there has been a thorough appreciation by army and navy of the value of the amateur as a source of skilled radio personnel in time of war. In April, 1917, the United States government placed a ban on the operation of all amateur apparatus. Amateur antennas were lowered, amateur transmitters were sealed, amateur receiving apparatus were ordered dismantled. But at the same time a representative of the navy department met with Hiram P. Maxim, founder and president of the American Radio Relay league and requested the aid of the league in enlisting its skilled relayers as radio instructors and operators for duration of the war. It was explained that the need was desperate. Five hundred operators were needed. A last broadcast went out over the league's relay route. Within 10 days the navy had its 500 operators. Before the war there were 3,500 such operators."

After the war the league was reorganized. In October, 1919, the ban on transmitting was lifted. Several things occurred in the next few years to strengthen relations between the amateur radio operators and army and navy. In 1924, when the United States dirigible Shenandoah made a tour of the country, amateurs provided continuous contact between the big ship and the ground. In 1925 when the United States battle fleet made a cruise of Australia and the navy wished to test out short wave apparatus for future communication purposes, it was the league's traffic manager who was in complete charge of an experimental high frequency set on the U. S. S. Seattle.

Definite friendly relations between the amateur and the armed forces of the government were cemented in 1925. In this year both the army and navy came to the league with proposals for amateur co-operation. The radio naval reserve and the army-amateur net are the outgrowth.